

Applicant Name North Powell Conservation District
Project Name Blackfoot Drought and Water Conservation Project

Project Abstract

The Blackfoot Challenge (BFC) has engaged in drought management and water conservation in the Blackfoot watershed since 2000. In early 2006, the BFC began looking at ways to expand and further define irrigation efficiency in the basin. Funding is needed to carry out ongoing drought management efforts and to further develop a long-term water conservation program. As part of these efforts, conserving energy and increasing water use efficiency in irrigation systems is critical to keeping producer operational costs down, which helps preserve agriculture land use. As part of project implementation, the BFC felt that its ongoing drought management efforts, as well as general coordination of basin restoration activities, would be critical to ensure success. These findings led the BFC to pursue this grant application.

The North Powell Conservation District and the BFC are co-sponsoring this project to:

- Implement drought response in the basin;
- Complete energy audits and maintenance evaluations to identify energy and water conservation measures in irrigation systems;
- Expand and improve ongoing soil moisture monitoring;
- Develop specific water conservation projects for implementation and inclusion in the Blackfoot Watershed Restoration Action Plan (Action Plan) and demonstrate restoration successes through long-term monitoring; and
- Provide management, coordination, and development services for new actions in the Blackfoot watershed.

Water and energy conservation are cornerstones of protecting the basin and its rural inhabitants. A total of \$84,346.80 of Renewable Resources Grant and Loan (RRGL) funds would be used to provide technical and coordination support for the BFC Action Plan and Long-Term Water Conservation Strategy that is implemented in partnership with the Big Blackfoot Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (DFWP), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Blackfoot landowners, and many others.